CLATSOP COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

History Matters

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- Onward and Upward!

January/February 2026

Revealers gambling and having a good time during Casino Night, 2025.

Casino Night

Winter has us thinking of the 1920s. This February 21st, the Heritage Museum slips back a century for Casino Night—our popular annual fundraiser. Meet us by the museum's back door for entry into our after-hours speakeasy. There will be plenty of gambling and hooch in this juice joint, plus a costume contest, so get all dolled up in your best glad rags. It will be the cat's meow…but you didn't hear it from me.

Get all dolled up for

Casino Night

February 21st, 6-10pm

Heritage Museum

1618 Exchange Street

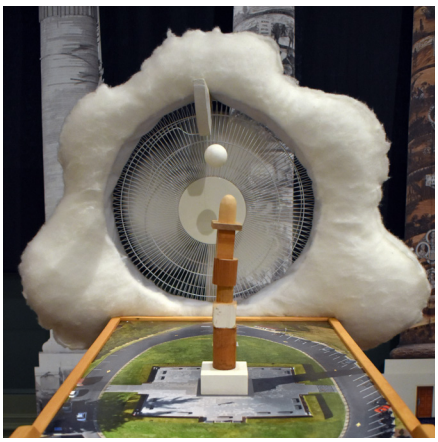
For more information:

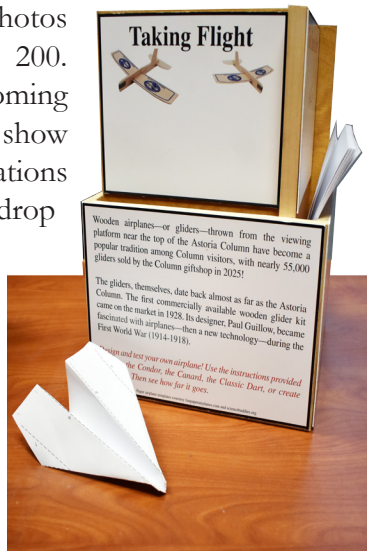
Curator's Corner

by Dr. Chelsea K. Vaughn, Curator

Happy 2026! This year marks the centennial of the Astoria Column—a major icon of the Astoria cityscape. An anniversary such as this demands celebration on multiple fronts. As a curator and public historian, I am delighted by the many ways in which I have been able to participate. For the past year, CCHS has been collecting personal photos of the Column, both historic and contemporary. So far, we have received more than 200. Thank you to everybody that contributed! Many of these will be on display in our upcoming Heritage Museum exhibit *100 Years of the Astoria Column* opening in early March. This show will also feature tons of historic photos, interesting information, and fun activity stations for kids of all ages. Once open, 100 Years of the Astoria Column will provide an important backdrop for other interesting events, including field trips, lectures, and general festivities.

More than 200 visitor photos have been collected, printed, matted, and are ready for display in the upcoming exhibit.




Taking Flight
Wooden airplanes—or gliders—thrown from the viewing platform near the top of the Astoria Column have become a popular tradition among Column visitors, with nearly 55,000 gliders sold by the Column giftshop in 2025!
The gliders, themselves, date back almost as far as the Astoria Column. The first commercially available wooden glider kit came on the market in 1928. Its designer, Paul Guillow, became fascinated with airplanes—then a new technology—during the First World War (1914-1918).

Activity stations for the exhibit *100 Years of the Astoria Column* will include "Taking Flight" [above] and "Building Against the Wind" [left].

Musings

You've heard me say it about 2023, and again after 2024, that we had record attendance at the Flavel House, Heritage Museum, and the Oregon Film Museum. Well, it happened again in 2025 when we surpassed all previous attendance records: The Clatsop County Historical Society welcomed more than 108,000 visitors to our museums and events last year!

We would not be able to educate and entertain even a fraction of that number without the support of our Members and so many others. Volunteers are the lifeblood of any non-profit but it is especially true for CCHS. Dozens of really nice people serve as docents in the Flavel House while others help in the Liisa Penner Research & Archives scanning, documenting, cataloging, and researching. The Flavel House Garden Society continue their dramatic transformation of the grounds. None of our special events and activities would be possible without the time and talent of volunteers. They speak at Thursday Night Talks, serve tea and scones at Mother's Day and plum pudding throughout December, do research and don costumes at Talking Tombstones, take tickets at Casino Night, and bring fun activities to life at Old Fashioned Fun & Games. Sometimes, they even speak Goonies during the annual Goonies Day anniversary. That is a really ambitious calendar of events for an historical society based in a rural county of about 30,000. I am not aware of another historical society with such a busy schedule.

The CCHS Board of Directors are also volunteers. Their steady leadership, guidance, enthusiasm, and willingness to be ambassadors have been critical to the growth and success in recent years.

The staff of CCHS is second to none. In addition to greeting and assisting visitors from all over the globe and planning events, they create first-class exhibits (when was your last visit to the Heritage Museum?), publish books and magazines, help researchers, give lectures, lovingly care for our historic buildings, and preserve and share more than 100,000 artifacts, documents, and photographs. We do this with an annual budget of about a million dollars.

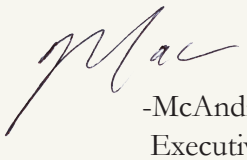
Some exciting achievements happened in 2025.

Our partnership with the Friends of Astoria Column continues to help both organizations. The Column turns 100 this year, so 2026 will be exciting as we celebrate the Column Centennial.

We celebrated the 40th Anniversary of The Goonies. The expansion of the Oregon Film Museum is still a primary goal and need. We have begun the permitting process with the City and hope to show some progress soon.

The digitization of our collections and making them accessible on the Internet Archive (just three clicks on our website) continued this year. Begun with the prodding, leadership, and generosity of Tom & Annie Smith, we have scanned thousands of items and made them available online. We are so thankful for their continued enthusiasm and support, as well as the other donors who have answered the call and are supporting these efforts.

As I write this and think about all that was accomplished last year and all the plans for the coming years, I am struck by what a collective effort this is: volunteers, board members, staff. But, I have yet to mention you, loyal Member of CCHS! Whether you have an individual Membership or Patron Level, your support is so appreciated and has a huge impact. We rely on the generosity of our friends in the community. I hope you take pride in your Membership and know what a difference it makes. I hope to see you at one of our events or in one of the museums soon.

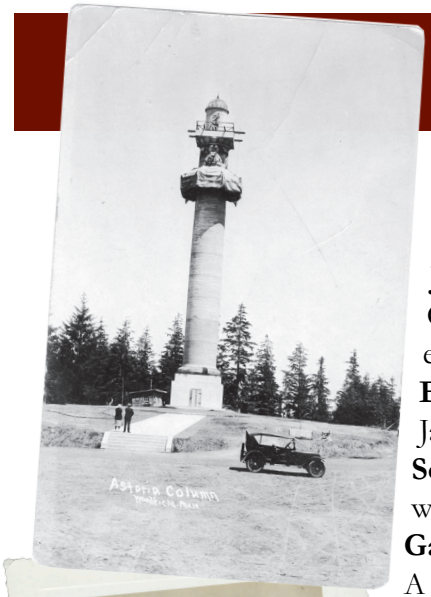


-McAndrew Burns,
Executive Director

CLATSOP COUNTY
HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A Monumental Year

by Meredith Barlow-Spry , Buyer



Visitors to the Astoria Column 1926 [top] and 1948 [bellow].

For Friends of Astoria Column, 2026 is an extra special year. The Astoria Column turns 100 years old! We will be celebrating in various, fun ways throughout the year.

Here's how we will be kicking things off in January/February:

January Fitness Challenge: purchase a punch card for $1.00 and climb to the top of the Column 20 times during the month. Winners will receive a special prize for their outstanding efforts!

Exclusive Centennial Merchandise: our first launch of new products will begin on January 6th in the Column Gift Shop.

Soaring Resolutions: Send your resolution flying by writing it on one of our "famous" balsa wood gliders! Can't make it to the top? No problem; we'll throw it off the top for you!

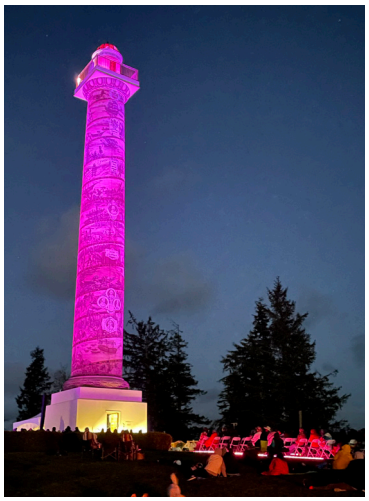
Gathering Love Stories: Did you get engaged at the top? Have your wedding on the plaza? A first date, maybe? We'd love to share your story.

We'll also be gathering photos throughout 2026. Please send your photos and submissions to sales@astoriacolumn.org.

Thursday Night Talks

Our celebration of all things Astoria Column continues into our Thursday Night Talks as well. Over the coming months, look for a variety of exciting, Column-themed talks on the third Thursday of each month in the Fort George Lovel Showroom. January's TNT started the festivities with Jeff Daley's look back at the "Musical Stairs" concert performed in September of 2024 from inside the Column.

Doors open at 6. Talk begins at 7.



Audience members enjoy music and a light show during the "Musical Stairs" performance.

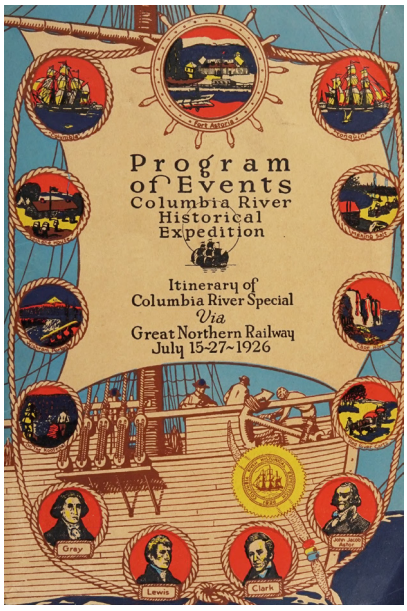
Digital Archive News

by Julie Burpee, Digital Archivist

We all love our Astoria Column! Since 1926, it has become the very symbol for our beautiful town. But do you know about the reason it was a column and not just a flagpole? Ever wondered where the Columbia River Historical Expedition on the Great Northern Railroad went after it left Astoria? Or where it started? All of these questions, and more, can be answered on the CCHS Internet Archive site, and more specifically in the Astoria Column subcollection. You can get there by using the QR code below, or by entering this website address: https://archive.org/details/astoriacolumn.

Enjoy becoming the person in your family who knows the most about our Astoria Column!

Learn more about the Astoria Column! Access our digital collection here:



"Program of Events" from the Columbia River Historical Expedition which, in 1926, traveled between Chicago and Astoria via train and included the dedication of the Astoria Column among the events.

This and other materials related to the Astoria Column are available online through our Astoria Column subcollection.

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Upcoming Events

January 1-31: Soaring Resolutions and January Fitness Challenge, Astoria Column, purchase gliders and punch cards in the Column gift shop.

February 21: *Casino Night*, Heritage Museum, 1618 Exchange Street, 6-10pm.

February 19: *TNT*, Fort George Brewery Lovell Showroom, 1483 Duane Street, doors open at 6.

Ongoing Events

Sundays, 8:30-9pm: Mac Burns and Alana Kujala host *An Adventure in History* on KMUN.

Wednesdays at 1pm: Flavel House Garden Society, volunteers meet at the Flavel House Grounds.

Coming up…

Look for our newest exhibit, *100 Years of the Astoria Column,* opening in March at the Heritage Museum.

View from Coxcomb Hill

A car parks in the roadway surrounding the Column following the completion of the mural in October 1926.